THE TENTH DAY.

9th March 1922.

The Assembly met at 11-45 A. M. on Thursday, the 9th March 1922.

122. Educational concessions to Ezhavas and other backward communities.

Mr. K. Kunju Panikkan (Member, Nominated) pointed out that the Government were to some extent responsible for keeping back the Ezhava community from getting access to educational institutions at a time when the cost of education was much smaller than what it was now and this backwardness in education was the main factor that stood in the way of their economic progress. Ezhavas were a poor class in point of material prosperity and hence they deserved all the concessions afforded to backward classes. The Member, therefore, requested that concessions in the matter of education generally accorded to members of the depressed classes might be extended to the Ezhavas also. In regard to Pulayas and Parayas, the Member suggested that at least five boarding schools, one in each revenue Division of the State, might be established, all the expenses of the pupils being met by Government.

Mr. N. Kumaran Asan (Member, Nominated) supported the two Ezhava Members that spoke before him. He observed that the proportion of educated Ezhavas compared unfavourably with that of other communities like Nairs and Christians and that it was not therefore correct to look upon Ezhavas as a forward class.

The reasons why Ezhavas did not so far agitate for any fee concessions were that fee concessions were not formerly allowed to similarly backward classes and that the time and energy of the community had first to be devoted to the question of obtaining access to educational institutions. Having secured this right, the Ezhavas now asked for such educational concessions as were allowed to backward communities. This would be all the more necessary in view of the proposal of Government to enhance the fees in the higher classes in which the number of Ezhavas were markedly low even at present.

Speaking of the expenditure incurred by Government in the Department of Education, the Member said that the main portion of it went in the shape of salaries to the officers of the Department who were mostly Brahmins, Christians and Nairs. The number of Ezhavas in the Department was very small. This was one other reason why they should be given special consideration. The Member pointed out that half-fee concessions up to the College classes were being allowed to Ezhavas in Cochin and British Malabar and he prayed that similar concessions be granted to the community in Travancore as well. In case Government considered it not feasible to allow half-fee concessions to Ezhavas in all the classes, he requested that the same be allowed at least in English schools and colleges where their numbers were small. In conclusion, the Member referred to the students' strike and requested that Government might adopt a policy of 'forget and forgive' in that matter. Excesses, he said, might have been committed both by the officers of Government and the students; but so long as Government had decided not to institute an enquiry into either of them, it was unfair that the students alone should be punished. He, therefore, requested that the punishment awarded to some of the students in connection with the strike be cancelled.

Dewan's reply.—I find, on a comparison of the census figures to which you also refer, that, in point of general education, your community is not backward. But

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

there is no gainsaying the fact that in point of English literacy and higher education your community compares unfavourably with other communities such as Brahmins, Nairs and Christians. All the representations that have been made in regard to this matter and especially in regard to English and higher education will receive the attention of Government.

123. Establishment of an English Middle School and the grant of other educational facilities for Arayans.

Mr. K. Velayudha Panikkan (Member, Nominated) represented that there were nofacilities for the pupils of his community for English education, that it was with a view to remove that disability that he urged, at some of the previous sessions of the Assembly, the necessity for the opening of an English Middle School, and that, although the matter was investigated and steps were taken to fix a site for the school, the school had not yet been opened. The Member then dealt with the need for the opening of at least one school in each taluk for the imparting of purely literary education as well as of industrial education in fish-curing and coir manufacture. He then said that Government were not encouraging the few qualified members of his community by giving appointments to them. This was one of the reasons for the present educational backwardness of that community.

In conclusion, the Member requested (1) that an English school with provision for the teaching of industrial subjects might be opened, (2) that technical institutions might be started for the imparting of education in fish industries, (3) that scholarships might be awarded to Araya students who come up for collegiate education, and (4) that suitable appointments might be given to qualified members of his community.

Dewan's reply.—The strength of your community is 9,000 in the whole State. Valans are not included in this figure. We cannot open a special school for such a comparatively small community. All schools are open to the members of your community and your youths are already getting the half-fee concession and the question of further facilities to backward classes in the matter of education is under consideration. We are increasing the number of fish-curing yards in the State. A Night School will shortly be opened at Cheriya Azhikal for members of your community.

124. Educational concessions to Gauda Saraswat Brahmins.

Mr. T. A. Gopala Pye (Member, Municipal Council, Alwaye) submitted that, while the Gauda Saraswat Brahmin community in Travancore numbered about 10,000, only a small figure was found returned at the last Census, and stated that this was evidently due to some mistake in the census operations. It was really humiliating to the community to see that a very small proportion of its members alone had received higher education. Out of the whole community, only fifteen had obtained University degrees and only about fifty or sixty had passed the English School Leaving Certificate Examination. Although 60 per cent of the community were of school-going age, only a few of them attended schools. The Gauda Saraswat Brahmins should, therefore, be classed with the educationally backward communities and allowed all the concessions usually afforded to such communities.

As an incentive to its members to pursue higher studies, the Member also prayed that preference be shown to the educated representatives of the community in the matter of Government appointments.

Dewan's reply.—You say that the strength of your community is 10,000. But the census figures show a smaller strength. It seems to me that it is too small a community to be thought fit for any special educational concessions. Further, the community is not so backward or poor as to deserve the concessions prayed for. I know that yours is a trading community and that such communities are not very particular about higher education. You yourself admit that 60 per cent of the members of your community are literate.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly